Management of coral reef eco-system in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

4150. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI:
SHRI JIBON ROY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the UNDP has agreed to assist India with conservation and management of the coral reef ecosystem in Andaman and Nicobar Islands;

(b) if so, the nature of the assistance provided by UNDP; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to stop further deterioration the ecosystem in Andaman and Nicobar Islands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as an Implementing Agency of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has acted as a facilitator in securing financial assistance of US $ 3,45,000 from GEF to develop a Management Plan for selected sites of coral reefs in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

(c) The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification (1991) issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 prohibits the use of corals and sands from the beaches and coastal water for construction and other purposes. Dredging and underwater blasting in and around coral formations is also prohibited. Collection and destruction of corals in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is banned under the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Fisheries Regulation read with the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Shell Fishing Rules, 1978. In addition to these regulatory measures, financial assistance is provided to the A&N Administration for implementation of management action plans for conservation and management of coral reefs under the scheme on Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs.

Measures to combat vehicular pollution

4151. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking/ have taken any measures to combat vehicular pollution; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The steps taken during the past 10 years for control of vehicular pollution in the metros include the following:

(i) The Central Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 was amended in 1988 and 1994, wherein provisions for control of automobile pollution were notified.

(ii) Emission norms were notified in the Central Motor Vehicles Rules in 1989. These include mass emission standards for emissions for both petrol and diesel vehicles of all categories, at the manufacturing stage and gross emission standards for vehicles on-road.

(iii) Emission standards have been progressively tightened for emissions from vehicles at the manufacturing stage. The norms first came into effect on 9.1.1990 and a tighter emission standard was introduced on 1.4.1996. A more stringent norm effective from 1.4.2000 has been notified. This would help introduce cleaner vehicles involving upgradation of technologies to reduce emissions from vehicles.

(iv) Ambient air quality standards have been notified in the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and in the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. These include standards for major air pollutants for different areas such as residential, industrial, sensitive areas. The Central Pollution Control Board is monitoring the levels of air pollutants in all the

major cities and towns, through a network of 290 ambient air quality monitoring stations under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (NAAQM) Network. The data help understand the trends in air quality.

(v) A major vehicular pollution survey covering 12 major cities in the country, namely; Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Nagpur, was carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board during 1987. The survey has helped understand the levels of pollution in these cities and recommend suitable abatement measures for its prevention and control.

(vi) The Government in the first phase reduced the lead content in petrol supplied in the 4 metros of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai from June 1994 to less than 0.15 grams per litre of petrol. Low-lead petrol was introduced in the entire country on 1.1.1997.

(vii) Unleaded petrol (petrol with a lead content of less than 0.013 grams per litre of petrol) was introduced in the 4 metros Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai from 1.4.1995 for the use of new 4-wheeler petrol vehicles fitted with catalytic converters introduced in these metros from this date. This programme was extended to all the major cities including capitals of all States and UTs from 1.6.1998 and would cover the entire country from 1.4.2000. Emissions from vehicles fitted with catalytic converters are reduced by more than 50% as compared to ordinary vehicles.

(viii) A similar programme at the national level has been launched for the introduction of low-sulphur diesel, to reduce the levels of particulate emissions from diesel vehicles. In the first phase, low-sulphur diesel (of 0.5% sulphur) was introduced in the 4 metros of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai with effect from 1.4.1996 and 0.25% sulphur diesel has been introduced in the Taj Trapezium from 1.9.1996, in Delhi with effect from 14.8.1997 and in the three metros of Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai effective from 1.4.1998. Low-sulphur diesel of 0.25% of sulphur is planned to be introduced in the entire country from 1.9.1999.

(ix) Control of vehicular pollution from in-use vehicles is implemented through the respective State Transport Departments of various States. The Central Government has advised the various states to strictly enforce the standards for emissions from on-road vehicles and create awareness amongst the general public on the various aspects such as maintenance of vehicles, health effects of vehicular pollution and punitive measures for violations of emission standards for on-road vehicles. It has been recommended that public transport should be strengthened and mass transport system introduced in all the major cities.

Increase in Bronchial asthma due to pollution

4152. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bronchial asthma is increasing more in India and all over the world including the developed countries where the problem of air pollution is more or less controlled;

(b) if so, what is the position in India, where pollution is spreading day by day; and

(c) what steps have been taken during the last one decade to control increase or incidence of air pollution in India?